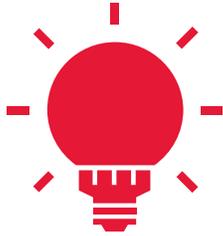# STORY DEVELOPMENT STEPS

Extension stories should always reflect our mission to grow North Carolina and leave the reader with the belief that "Extension can improve my life."

1 DEFINE
A well-defined topic

> Confirm the story topic
> Ensure it supports our mission
> Identify your audience

2 DEVELOP
A clear, simple narrative

> Filter and frame the story using Extension Story Checklist
> Introduce the characters, setting and challenge
> Highlight benefits and impact for target audience

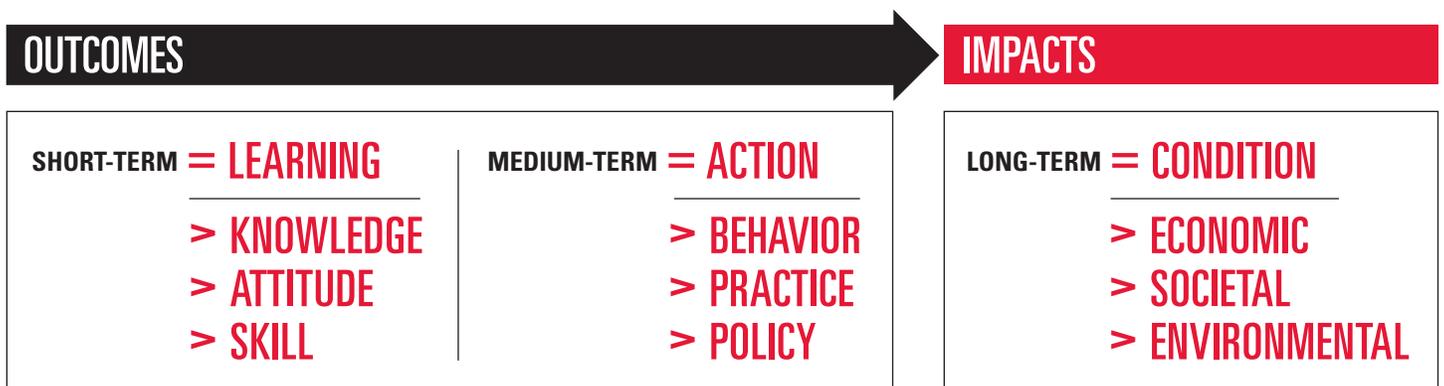## 3 DELIVER
A plan to publicize impacts

> Select relevent external communication channels
> *Where does your audience go for information?*
> Identify internal communication channels
> *Where should your story be posted internally?*

OUTCOMES VS. IMPACTS

Sharing quantitative data is important, but numbers alone often paint an incomplete picture and may not connect with your audience. Communicating via stories provides valuable context and makes our work more relatable and relevant.

OUTCOMES ➝ **IMPACTS**

OUTCOMES		IMPACTS
SHORT-TERM = LEARNING	**MEDIUM-TERM = ACTION**	**LONG-TERM = CONDITION**
> KNOWLEDGE > ATTITUDE > SKILL	> BEHAVIOR > PRACTICE > POLICY	> ECONOMIC > SOCIETAL > ENVIRONMENTAL

Conveying **short/medium-term outcomes** in your stories is important (e.g. number of workshop attendees or people buying from farmers markets), but it does not reflect long-term value and opportunity.

Strive to demonstrate significant **long-term impacts** as well, which illustrate meaningful change or the potential for such change (e.g. economic growth, reductions in obesity or improvements in environmental conditions).

Find more storytelling resources at **go.ncsu.edu/Extension-Storytelling**

EXTENSION STORY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

To get started, complete this outline to help you prioritize topics and frame your stories in a way that grows our Extension brand.

Story Topic Checkpoint

Does your story topic clearly demonstrate how Extension is growing our state or improving the lives of North Carolinians?
> *If not, rethink the topic or approach it from another angle*

Your story topic should demonstrate at least one of the following themes (the more the better):
> Extension has the best people
> Extension's partnerships enrich our work and benefit the state
> Extension delivers research-based programs and resources to address client needs
> Extension provides individualized solutions that equip clients to make better-informed decisions

Summarize your topic: _____

Identify your main goal: _____
> What do you want your story to accomplish (e.g. educate/inform, promote an event/program, convey value to stakeholders)?

List your target audience(s): _____
_____
> Who is affected by this topic or issue (why should they care)? Who stands to gain or lose something as a result?
> Who needs to know about this in order to reach your goal?

Introduce the characters: _____
_____
_____
> Who are the qualified Extension experts / programs involved? What about clients or partners?
> How are they addressing the topic / issue or involved with it?

Simply state the challenge / issue: _____
_____
_____
> What conflict or issue are we helping to resolve? What can / are we doing to address it?
> What was the turning point or the thing that really made a difference?

Highlight the benefits and outcomes / impacts: _____
_____
_____
> How can or will your efforts benefit the target audience(s)? Why should they care?
> How did it help the main character(s)? How can it help others going forward (what's the long-term impact)?
> What insights were gained?